

had one cry over the illusions of her youth. It was but a short one. She asked herself, if those two men stood before her now, which she should take? 'Why the man, and not the cur!'

They were married privately on Monday at 10:30. At 11 came by appointment the lawyer and two witnesses. Mrs. Samuel Sutton was sent upstairs to put on her travelling dress. Meantime Mr. Sutton and the lawyer did business.

'Mr. Dawson, my second will was open to objection. I left too much to a menial.'

'Well, sir,' said the lawyer, 'it was not for me to advise—'

'But you agree with me.'

'Perfectly.'

'Well, then, cancel will 2.'

'Both wills are cancelled by your marriage, sir.'

'Ah! I forgot. Well, draw me a will on the lines of my first, only no rigmarole this time. I'm in a hurry. You can charge me for a volume, but put it all in the ace of spades, that's a good soul.'

The lawyer consented, and handed Mr. Sutton testament No. 1 to peruse, and reminded him that in that testament the whole property was left to the Rev. Joseph Newton and his children—all but £5000 to Rebecca Barnes.

'My menial?'

'Yes. But £5000 was not excessive.'

'Not at all, if you knew the two parties. Well, sir, I don't think we can improve on the form of that will. Just reverse the provisions, that is all.'

The lawyer stared.

'Leave the £5000 to my nephew to play ducks and drakes with, and all my real and personal estate to my wife, Rebecca Sutton, and her heirs for ever.'

The lawyer stared, bowed, and set to work. Mr. Sutton left him to prepare for his journey, but in a few minutes came back and hurried him.

'Come, polish that off,' said he; 'we have only half-an-hour to get to the station.'

'I could engross it and send it up to you for signature,' suggested the solicitor.

'What! me go by rail intestate? No, thank you!'

The will was drawn and attested, and as he signed it Sutton said to the lawyer, 'You see I have not left my fortune to a menial; then, bitterly, 'nor yet to merecanaries.'

The wedded pair dashed up to London. Each looked lovingly at the other on the road, and Sutton said to himself—

'I have done this marriage in a vulgar way. She was entitled to more sentiment and—by Jove, now I look at her, she is a duck!'

She came back beaming with happiness, and he wore a conquering air that made folks smile. Sincers, however, flew about, and Mr. Sutton was now and then discomposed. Rebecca's watchful eye saw it. She never said a word about it, but she rummaged. One day the study door was ajar and she heard Mr. Sutton's voice louder than usual. A tradesman was there, and had said something blunt; she gathered as much from Mr. Sutton's answer.

'Why, here's a to do because a plain man of business has married his housekeeper that was brought up by his wife, and her father was just what I am, only not so lucky. Well, yes, I took a peach out of my own garden instead of a prickly pear out of a swell hothouse; and all the better for me, and all the worse for Joe Newton.'

Rebecca heard this in passing, turned round and put the tips of the fingers of both her hands to her lips, and blew the speaker a kiss through the door with an ardour and grace that would have adorned a lady of distinction.

Next morning she went to work in her way.

'My dear,' said she, gayly, 'I wonder whether you would give me a treat? The truth is, I have a great desire to see foreign countries, if it is agreeable to you.'

'Agreeable to me! Why I have been going to do it these thirty years.'

'Oh, I'm so glad! Then will you arrange a tour for us—a nice long one?'

Mr. Sutton fell into this without seeing all that lay behind. It was a fair specimen of Rebecca's handiwork.

By this means the house was shut up, the satirical servants discharged without a wrangle, and his friends and neighbors taught the value of Samuel Sutton by his absence. The couple travelled Europe wisely; never bound themselves to leave a place half enjoyed, nor stay in it exhausted. They were eighteen months away, but spent the last six in a lovely villa near the Bois de Boulogne.

They came home with a thumping boy and a Norman nurse, and both parents looked younger than when they went. The news spread like wildfire.

They bought that child abroad, said Mrs. Joe.

Alas for that romantic theory! Rebecca nursed him herself, and gloated over him, as mothers will, and fourteen months later produced a lovely girl. The parents were happy in their children and themselves; both found in their own hearts unsuspected treasures of tenderness. When they drove out together they often sat hand in hand as well as side by side, and one plain friend who saw their ways declared they were a young couple, and he would prove it.

'Ah, prove that, you dog,' said Samuel Cotton, laughing.

'Well, I will. A man is as old as he feels, and a woman's as old as she looks.'

The proverb was admitted, and the application thereof.

After a long struggle between poverty and pride, the Rev. Joseph Newton wrote to his uncle a piteous tale of his young family—and begged relief. He received an answer by return of post—"My dear Joe—This sort of thing is in your aunt's department. You had better write to her." Then there was fury in the house of Newton. Reproaches—defiance.

'Apply to that woman?—never!'

A few more months and county court summons, and Joe was reproached as a bad father, who could not sacrifice his pride to his children's welfare. So then Joe sent the hat to his aunt. He got a word of comfort and £100 by return of post. He was melted with gratitude, and said so openly. Mrs. Joe snubbed him, and said it was a mere drop out of the ocean the woman had robbed them of. Not a year passed without a contribution of this kind, sometimes unmasked, sometimes solicited. Aunt Rebecca drew the cheques; uncle Samuel connived with a shrug; it was money thrown into a bottomless pit, and he knew it.

Only once did Rebecca send advice to her dilapidated nephew—"You have enough, if you could but be master in your own house." Which was wasted most, the advice or the money, is a problem to be solved by him who shall have squared the circle.

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